

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Barite Hill / Nevada Goldfields Site

McCormick, South Carolina



Proposed Plan

February 2020

**Public meeting to discuss
the Proposed Plan**

Thursday, March 5, 2020

**6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the
McCormick County Administration
Center
601 S. Mine Street,
McCormick, South Carolina**

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites the public to comment on a Proposed Plan (Plan) to clean up Operable Unit One (OU1) at the Barite Hill/Nevada Goldfields Superfund Site (Site), located in McCormick, South Carolina. This fact sheet discusses EPA's Plan to address the adverse environmental impacts resulting from Site-related contamination. The public is encouraged to comment on the Plan during the comment period. The Plan and associated documents related to Site activities are available in the Administrative Record of the Information Repository located at the McCormick County Public Library, 201 Railroad Avenue, McCormick, South Carolina.

EPA'S Preferred Cleanup Remedy

Based on the conclusions of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study reports (RI/FS), the EPA has determined remedial actions are required. The preferred cleanup plan for OU1 at the Site includes the installation of a barrier wall and/or grout curtain to redirect groundwater away from buried waste rock that is located next to the Pit Lake. The cleanup also includes the treatment of the buried waste rock and the enhancement and/or expansion of the existing cap that is currently installed over the waste rock. In addition, surface water located in the Pit Lake will be treated to reduce metals concentrations. Contaminated sediments on the floor of the Pit Lake will also be capped. The cleanup plan also includes monitoring of surface water in the North Tributary to Hawe Creek.

Public Comment

EPA relies on public input to ensure the concerns of the community are considered in selecting an effective remedy for each Superfund Site. **The public comment period runs from February 7, 2020 through March 8, 2020.** The Administrative Record and Information Repository for the Barite Hill/Nevada Goldfields Superfund Site, which includes the Plan, are located at the McCormick County Public Library, 201 Railroad Ave., McCormick, South Carolina. You may also request for EPA to send you an electronic copy of the full Plan by email, or you can download the full report at <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/barite-hill-nevada-goldfields>.

EPA will host a public meeting on **Thursday, March 5, 2020 from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.** at the McCormick County Administration Center located at 601 S. Mine Street, McCormick, South Carolina. Representatives from EPA will present the details of the Plan to address the environmental impacts at the Barite Hill/Nevada Goldfields Superfund Site and answer any questions the public may have regarding the preferred cleanup remedy. You may email your comments to teichert.candice@epa.gov or, if you prefer to submit written comments, please mail them, postmarked no later than **March 8, 2020**, to Candice Teichert at US EPA, 61 Forsyth Street, SW, 11th Floor, Atlanta GA 30303.

After EPA has received comments and questions during the public comment period, EPA will summarize the comments and provide responses in the Responsiveness Summary which will be part of the Interim Record of Decision (IROD). The IROD will document the final remedial action and will provide the rationale of EPA's selection. Once completed, the IROD will be available for viewing in the Administrative Record at the McCormick County Public Library.

Background

The Barite Hill / Nevada Goldfields Site is located about three miles southwest of the town of McCormick, in McCormick County, South Carolina. The Site is surrounded by forested and agricultural land, and rural residential areas. No buildings, homes or commercial facilities are located within a 0.5-mile radius of the Site. The Site is 795-acres and approximately 135-acres of the property has been disturbed by historic and modern mining activities. The remaining property serves as an undisturbed buffer zone in a natural state. Exploratory gold mining operations began at the Site as early as the mid to late 1800s, followed by intermittent exploration activities in the 1960s to early 1980s. The Site was purchased in 1988 and mined for gold and silver between 1991 to 1994. Reclamation activities began in 1994 and continued until the Site was abandoned in July 1999. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) assumed control of the Site in 1999. In 2004, DHEC conducted a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection at the Site. Activities included the collection of 12 source samples (eight surface water and four sediment samples) from the on-site process area ponds, permanent leach pad solution ponds, and Pit Lake. In 2008, EPA conducted a Removal Action, including treating the Pit Lake water to near neutral pH, grading and covering waste rock dumps located next to the Pit Lake, and constructing a spillway. The Site was proposed to the National Priorities List (NPL) in September 2008 and finalized on April 9, 2009 because of contaminated groundwater, soil, sediment, and surface water resulting from the mining operations.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)

The EPA began the OU1 - Barite Hill Main Pit Lake System RI/FS in 2011 to determine the nature and extent of the contamination, as well as potential health risks. The EPA collected samples at the Site which confirm the presence of metals contamination in the soil, surface water, sediment and groundwater. Soil, surface water, groundwater, and sediment samples were collected, from 2011 to 2018, as part of the RI/FS. Using the environmental data collected at the Site, the EPA and DHEC have completed the OU1 - Barite Hill Main Pit Lake System RI/FS. The Feasibility Study (FS) addresses OU1 which includes surface water in the Pit Lake and groundwater gaining to and discharging from the Pit Lake. The FS also addresses source materials contributing contamination to the Pit Lake, including buried waste rock, sediments and exposed acid generating material along the walls enclosing the Pit Lake.

We want your comments!

The EPA relies on public input to ensure the concerns of the community are considered in selecting an effective remedy for each Superfund Site. The public is encouraged to comment on the documents from:

February 7, 2020 to March 8, 2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Website

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/barite-hill-nevada-goldfields>

Information Repository

McCormick County Public Library
201 Railroad Ave.
McCormick, SC 29835

U.S. EPA Region 4
Office Records Center
61 Forsyth St, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Figure 1: Site Location for Barite Hill / Nevada Goldfields Superfund Site

December 8, 2010

